

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

SPC-03 DRC-01 /093 W
----- 031389

R 050510Z NOV 73

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1857
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MELBOURNE 1140

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: DLAB, OCON, AS
SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE:
COMMENT ON ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN MINISTER
OF LABOR, CLYDE CAMERON.

1. CAMERON SPEND WHOLE WEEK IN SYDNEY, ATTENDING EVERY
SESSION AND ALL SOCIAL EVENTS; CHAIRING THE OPENING
SESSION AND FINAL SESSION, WHICH DRAFTED FINAL
COMMUNIQUE. UNUSUAL ALLOCATION OF TIME TO THIS PROJECT
BY BUSY MINISTER OF LABOR, EXPLAINED ON LAST DAY
OF CONFERENCE, WHEN CAMERON TOLD LABATT IN PRIVATE
CONVERSATION, THAT CONFERENCE WAS "OWN IDEA" WHICH HE
PERSONALLY SPONSORED WITH PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM AS
FAR BACK AS FEBRUARY 1973. THIS WAS BACKGROUND FOR
WHITLAM'S INVITATIONS FOR CONFERENCE, ISSUED AT TIME
OF SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM IN APRIL THIS YEAR.

2. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, CAMERON WAS GOOD-HUMORED,
DIGNIFIED CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN THROUGHOUT. HE WAS
FREELY AVAILABLE TO DELEGATES, OBSERVERS AND PRESS,
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AND LEFT NO DOUBT AT ALL THAT HE REGARDED AUSTRALIA'S

INITIATIVE AS MAJOR ATTEMPT TO SECURE LABOR PARTICIPATION IN HIS COUNTRY'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY. HE TOLD LABATT ON NOVEMBER 1 THAT CONFERENCE WAS "UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS", AND THAT HE DID NOT SHARE OBVIOUS CONCERN OF SECRETARY OF LABOR, IAN SHARP, AND OTHER AUSTRALIANS, THAT AUSTRALIA WAS "STUCK WITH" ADDED ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS BEYOND WHAT THEY HAD PLANNED. (HE WAS REFERRING HERE TO AUSTRALIA'S PROMISE TO PERFORM BUREAUCRATIC FUNCTIONS FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES).

3. ODDLY FOR SUCH A STAUNCH ANTI-COLONIALIST, CAMERON REFERRED FREQUENTLY TO GEORGE FOGGON, BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE, PARTICULARLY ON MATTERS RELATING TO LANGUAGE IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE. FOGGON WAS PUBLICLY GIVEN TASK OF REWORKING MANY KNOTTED PHRASES, AND IN RESOLVING SOME DIFFICULT ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS; A ROLE WHICH FOGGON ACCEPTED WITH EVIDENT RELISH. CAMERON AT SIGNING SESSION IN AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 1, PAID GLOWING PUBLIC TRIBUTE TO FOGGON, GIVING HIM PRECEDENCE ABOVE ALL OTHERS WHOM HE MENTIONED AS MAKING IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONFERENCE SUCCESS. WHILE FOGGON WAS NOT ASKED, AND WHILE GREAT BRITAIN IS NOT MENTIONED IN COMMUNIQUE, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT CONFERENCE WILL LOOK TO THAT COUNTRY FOR CONTINUATION OF WHAT BRITISH TRAINING SCHEMES STILL EXIST IN ASIA-PACIFIC.

FLUKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, MEETING CHAIRMAN, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 NOV 1973
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MELBOU01140
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MELBOURNE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731155/aaaabocc.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <13-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH PACIFIC LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE: COMMENT ON ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN MINISTER
TAGS: ELAB, OCON, AS, (CAMERON, CLYDE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005